



**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS**

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PEARL CITY, HAWAII 96782  
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SCOTT T. NAGO  
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

**TESTIMONY OF THE  
CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER, OFFICE OF ELECTIONS  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 179  
RELATING TO PERMANENT ABSENTEE BALLOTS**

**January 30, 2015**

Chair Rhoads and members of the House Committee on Judiciary, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 179. The purpose of this bill is to require that the forwarding address for a permanent absentee mail voter be the mailing address contained in the voter's registration record.

Currently a voter is able to request an absentee ballot for a particular election or permanently. Specifically, we have a seasonal application that permits a voter to request a mail ballot to be forwarded to an address for the Primary Election or the General Election, or both. The other application is the permanent absentee ballot application that requires a voter to provide a permanent forwarding address for all future ballots.

The seasonal form is meant to be used by students who are away at school on the mainland, members of the military deployed out-of-state, or any other person who will simply be out-of-the state at the time of the election. These individuals will only temporarily be out-of-the state and have the intent to return after they complete whatever has caused them to be out of the state. This is consistent with our voter registration laws regarding in-state residency that speak of a voter having the intention to return to one's residence, when the person is absent. HRS § 11-13. The permanent absentee form is meant to be used by residents who no longer want to go to the polls and would prefer the convenience of receiving their ballot at home.

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Unfortunately, we have found that some voters are now listing an out-of-state address as their permanent forwarding address. While we understand that a voter may envision that they will be out of the state for an extended period of time, it is inconsistent with the concept of in-state residency to essentially declare that one will be permanently out-of-state. Such individuals should instead be utilizing the seasonal application each election cycle, as that form is consistent with the concept of being temporarily out-of-state and eventually intending to return.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 179.

DANNY A. MATEO  
County Clerk



JOSIAH K. NISHITA  
Deputy County Clerk

## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 S. HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
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TESTIMONY OF DANNY A. MATEO  
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF MAUI  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 179  
RELATING TO PERMANENT ABSENTEE BALLOTS  
JANUARY 30, 2015

Chair Rhoads and members of the House Committee on Judiciary, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill No. 179. The purpose of this bill is to specify the mailing address in a voter's registration record as the forwarding address for receiving absentee ballots permanently. Also, this bill requires voters seeking a permanent absentee ballot with a different forwarding address to re-apply for an absentee ballot.

The Office of the County Clerk, County of Maui, supports House Bill No. 179.

The purpose of the permanent absentee application is to allow voters to remain on the absentee mail list for each election without having to re-apply every year, provided they follow certain conditions. However, we found that voters were updating their voter registration information, but not their permanent absentee record.

Allowing permanent absentee voters to have their ballot mailed to the mailing address on their most recently completed affidavit on application for voter registration will ensure that their permanent absentee record is also updated and reduce the number of undeliverable absentee mail ballots.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 179.



## OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

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**GLEN TAKAHASHI**  
ACTING CITY CLERK

### **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

TESTIMONY OF GLEN TAKAHASHI

ACTING CITY CLERK, CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

ON HOUSE BILL NO. 179

RELATING TO PERMANENT ABSENTEE BALLOTS

January 29, 2015

Chair Rhoads and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We support the intent of this bill to help preserve the permanent absentee status of a registered voter by synchronizing the ballot forwarding address with the voter's registration mailing address. We feel if the ballot forwarding address were limited to the county in which the voter is registered, it would better support the integrity of the permanent absentee voter list.

We would like to propose for your consideration a conforming amendment to HRS § 11-15 (a) (4) as follows:

(4) Residence, including mailing address within the county;

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 179.

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Alan Watanabe	Individual	Oppose	No

RICKY R. WATANABE  
County Clerk

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**ELECTIONS DIVISION  
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK**  
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TESTIMONY OF RICKY R. WATANABE  
COUNTY CLERK, COUNTY OF KAUA'I  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
ON HOUSE BILL NO. 179  
RELATING TO PERMANENT ABSENTEE BALLOTS  
January 30, 2015

Chair Rhoads and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 179. This Bill specifies the mailing address in a voter's registration record as the forwarding address for receiving absentee ballots permanently and requires voters seeking to have permanent absentee ballots forwarded to another address to re-apply for an absentee ballot.

Currently, permanent absentee ballot (PAB) voters are required to maintain separate addresses for their voter registration and PAB records within the statewide voter registration system. While cumbersome, this process is necessary due to the current provision in law which allows a PAB voter to have their absentee ballots permanently mailed to a different address.

While most PAB voters are fairly good at keeping their voter registration information current, a significant number of them fail to also maintain updated ballot forwarding addresses in their PAB records so the U.S. Postal Service cannot deliver their ballots and are forced to return them to the county clerks. Returned PAB ballots trigger a very time-consuming follow-up process which prevents the timely delivery of a PAB voter's ballot.

If approved, this Bill will resolve the aforementioned issues because a PAB voter's ballot forwarding address will be automatically updated during the voter reregistration process. PAB voter's needing ballots temporarily mailed to a different address can still do so via a "seasonal" absentee ballot application submitted prior to each election.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 179.

RICKY R. WATANABE  
County Clerk